Your superintendent, Dr. Purple Gold, is being questioned by parents and the local PAGE group about your county’s local AIG plan and its alignment to current research.  He asks you to design a subpage for the district website that includes information about 3 specific components addressed in the local plan: identification, placement, and services.  First, he requests that you write research-based paragraphs introducing *each* component below and justify the importance of the component with peer-reviewed literature (sections titled Research Based Information on …). These paragraphs will build background knowledge for the gifted advocates and stakeholders in your county.  Second, he wants you to assess what is currently included in your local AIG plan in regards to identification, placement, and services.  Third, he asks that you offer the county a rating *and* recommendation(s) for each of the three components in the local AIG plan.

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| **CONTENT** | | | **LOCAL PLAN APPLICATION** | | |
| **Component** | | | **Items specific to the local plan** | | **Assessing the county** |
| 1 | **Identification** | | **Highlight all of the following indicators that are evident in the local plan:**   * The identification process is clear and comprehensive. * Identification process is defensible as evidenced by most current research and recommendations in the field of gifted education. * Assessments in the area of intellectual and academic fields, K-12, use a minimum of three (3) appropriate criteria that include both qualitative and quantitative measures with adequate reliability and validity. * Assessment instruments for identification reflect sensitivity to economic conditions, gender, developmental differences, learning difference and diversity of students so that equal opportunity for consideration is provided to all students. * When appropriate, professional personnel administer individualized assessments in the language in which the student is most fluent. * When appropriate individual assessments are designated to assess strength-based areas of gifted students and are administered by professional personnel. * An inter-rater reliability process is clearly articulated that ensures a child in School A identified as gifted using a minimum of three (3) appropriate criteria that include both qualitative and quantitative measures with adequate reliability and validity would also be identified as gifted using the same criteria in School B. * The identification process is designed to organize multiple kinds of data free of weighing and cut-off scores.   Additional Notes: | | **Highlight one**    Strong Evidence of proper identification  Some Evidence of proper identification  Limited/No Evidence of proper identification    **Based on your content knowledge and current research, write your recommendations to the superintendent:**    1. I would recommend educating teachers and families about the characteristics of students with gifts and talents. Teachers and families play a key role in the nomination process for identifying gifted students. If they are not equipped with the right knowledge to understand the difference between a bright student and a gifted student, it will be hard to rely on their nomination for the student. Also, teachers may believe that giftedness is simply determined through high academic achievement (Roberts, Inman, & Robins, 2018). Families need to be aware of the range of characteristics of students with gifts and talents (Roberts, Inman, & Robins, 2018). For these reasons, teachers and families need to be educated on the characteristics of gifted students.  2. I would recommend having some pull-out sessions with those students on a higher level in K-2 in extension to LIFT. This gives more background knowledge for the AIG team once the child hits the age for identification and testing. It also helps meet the needs of the students to nurture their gifts at a young age. Coleman (2003) states that we need multiple pieces of evidence when identifying gifted learners. With adding the pullout classes in K-2, it gives us more data over a range of time that can be analyzed.  3. The last thing I would recommend in terms of identification is allowing ELL students the opportunity to test in the language they are fluent in. Simply because they do not know the language of the country they are in, does not determine their cognitive or creative abilities. As a school system, we have to allow them a fair opportunity to demonstrate they can respond to advanced material (NAGC, 2011). |
| **Research Based Information on IDENTIFICATION** | | | Defining giftedness is one that is a contentious task. Many have differing opinions on what giftedness is and how to identify it when it comes to the students. However, since the 20th century, giftedness has been connected to high intelligence and exceptional performance (Mcclain & Pfeiffer, 2012). Much like the definition of giftedness, the identification of gifted students is continuously talked about and explored in the gifted community. Prior to the end of the 20th century, IQ scores were the sole resource used to identify gifted students. However, gifted authorities realized there were limitations in simply using the IQ scores into the first decade of the 21st century (Mcclain & Pfeiffer, 2012).  Many will agree that the best identification processes should rely on multiple pieces of information to look for students that have gifts and talents (Coleman, 2003). With this in mind, Coleman (2003) continues to explain that identification should involve multiple types of information such as indicators of student’s cognitive abilities, academic achievement, interests, creativity, motivation, and learning characteristics. Test scores, grades, teacher comments, parents, peers, and students should take part in providing information for identification (Coleman, 2003). Typically, identification takes place at the end of second or third grade. However, Coleman (2003) states that identification should happen across multiple time periods so that students do not get overlooked. According to the National Association for Gifted Children, some tools that can be used for identification include assessments, nominations, teacher observations and ratings, portfolios and performances, and student educational profiles.  In most instances, identification takes place in two stages (McBee, Peters, & Miller, 2016). During the nomination stage, students are screened for consideration based on nominations from teachers, parents, or high achievement test scores. The nomination stage can also be done in some schools through a checklist of characteristic typically exhibited in gifted students (McBee, Peters, & Miller, 2016). Through the study completed by McBee, Peters, and Miller (2016), they have concluded three key points in relation to the screening process. The first key point made was to increase the validity of nominations by making sure teachers are well equipped to understand how to pick out gifted characteristics in students. Secondly, select appropriate nomination cutoffs. This means lowering cutoffs for screening so that no one is accidently being left out. The final key point is possibly getting rid of the two-stage process of identification. If a simple and effective lower-quality assessment can be given to all students, there would be a better chance of system sensitivity. | | |
| **2** | **Placement** | | **Highlight all of the following indicators that are evident in the local plan:**   * Assessment instruments selected are deemed to be of equal importance in making placement decisions. * Understandable procedures for developing Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) and Individual Differentiated Education Plans (IDEP) are articulated and in place for all K-12 identified gifted students. * Processes are articulated and in place to assure that K-12 DEPs and IDEPs are accessible to students, parents, administrators, classroom teachers and teachers of gifted students. * Clearly articulated procedures exist in the plan for instructional placement of identified gifted students who may need changes in their K-12 DEP’s or IDEP’s to address possible furloughs, transfers (inside or outside school district) or other possible instructional changes in gifted services. * Procedures are clearly communicated for annual and midterm reviews of K-12 DEPs and/or IDEPs that reflect data-driven decisions specific to the unique needs of gifted students.     Additional Notes:   Procedures are included for annual review, but they are not included for midterm review. | | **Highlight one**  Strong Evidence  of proper placement decisions    Some Evidence  of proper placement decisions    Limited/No Evidence  of proper placement decisions    **Based on your content knowledge and current research, write your recommendations to the superintendent**   1. I believe that we need to make sure our AIG team is made up of trained professionals in order to evaluate student information for placement. The AIG team should consist of the AIG specialists as well as other teachers that have a background in gifted education. As Johnsen (2009) stated, the team has an important job of making sure assessments are equal, a student’s best performance is used, quantitative scores are comparable, errors in assessments are considered, and performance over time is utilized.  2. I would recommend having a placement for high school students. I do not feel simply them taking AP courses or college level courses are equivalent to having an actual AIG placement in a service. This could easily be a counselor that the students check in with at lunch time or any designated time for enrichment opportunities. Johnsen (2009) states that with placement the team decides where or if they will get services outside of class. However, it shouldn’t stop at elementary school.  3. I would recommend getting parents and guardians involved early on in the process of identification and placement. They give feedback and know how to support their child through difficult challenges sometimes more than we know (Callahan, 2005). Once students are nominated, parents can receive a questionnaire that gives us more information about the student that we can consider during placement. This can also help to close some of the gaps seen between Hispanic and black students. |
| **Research Based Information on PLACEMENT** | | | | Gifted Placement is an important step in gifted education. It is prevalent that those on the committee to help with gifted placement are trained professionals in gifted education. When these individuals come together they examine all of the data collected on the students to determine which students will receive services or activities outside of the regular education classroom (Johnsen, 2009). It is best to utilize a format when analyzing students to help see the student’s strengths and weaknesses. With this committee evaluation, it is important to make sure assessments are equally weighted, best performance is used, quantitative scores are comparable, errors are considered, and performance over time is described (Johnsen, 2009). When deciding gifted placement, it is important for the committee to understand the one piece of evidence should not disqualify a student from services, but any one piece of evidence is strong enough to reveal a need for services (Coleman, 2003).  When dealing with gifted placement and evaluating student portfolios, underrepresented populations also need to be considered. In order to counteract underrepresented populations being overlooked, policies for the process of identifying and placing gifted students should be based on multiple criteria and paths for identification (Callahan, 2005). Educators should include parents and guardians in the placement process. Through including the parents, we can gain more insight on the student, and gain assistance from the parent when their child takes on new challenges (Callahan, 2005). | |
| **3** | **Services** | **Highlight all of the following indicators that are evident in the local plan:**   * The plan offers a range of Program Service Options to address the unique needs of identified gifted students. * Program Service Options exist for K-5 identified gifted students. * Program Service Options exist for 6-8 identified gifted students. * Program Service Options exist for 9-12 identified gifted students. * Program Service Options are described K-5 (primary/elementary). * Program Service Options are described for 6-8 (middle school). * Program Service Options descriptions are described for 9-12 (high school).     Additional Notes: | | | **Highlight one**  Strong Evidence  of gifted services  Some Evidence  of gifted services  Limited/No Evidence  of gifted services    **Based on your content knowledge and current research, write your recommendations to the superintendent**   1. I would recommend adding on an AIG class for the middle school students that can be incorporated into their classrooms. It gives them the opportunity to continue to work with peers that are on their level (Rogers, 2007). With continuation in middle school, it will allow students the opportunity to continue to nurture their gifts and talents while being with peers that are on their same level of thinking. 2. I would recommend professional development training on differentiation in the classroom. Differentiation is necessary in the regular education classroom to meet the needs of all learners (Plucker & Callahan, 2014). Through professional development, teachers can learn activities they can do in the classroom to benefit gifted students. 3. I would recommend adding push in time to the elementary classroom at least once a week. Pushing in can benefit the student and classroom teacher. Collaboration between the teacher and AIG teacher could result in better enrichment opportunities for the students and the ability to group students in their own classroom with other higher-level thinkers ("Program delivery models for the gifted", 2019). Therefore, it will help meet their needs and allow them to feel valued in their regular education classroom. |
|  | **Research Based Information on SERVICES** | There are many different ways students can be serviced once they are identified as gifted. Due to the fact that each child is unique, it is important they are receiving the proper support so that their gifts can be developed into talents (Johnsen, 2009). The National Association for Gifted Children states gifted services can be provided though pull out programs, special classes, special schools, advanced placement courses, or dual enrollment courses. Often these services vary depending on the grade level of the student. Differentiation in the regular education classroom is typically the most common strategy used to help meet the needs of gifted and advanced students (Plucker & Callahan, 2014). However, in a study, Brighton, Hertberg, Moon, Tomlinson, and Callahan found the teachers typically differentiate with a focus on students that are struggling to learn (Plucker & Callahan, 2014). With this mindset, it does not help meet the needs of gifted learners.  Rogers (2007) shared that in the Kuliks study it was reported that there have been positive academic effects from gifted students being surrounded by other gifted and like-minded individuals. Teachers of pull out services are typically more trained and better equipped with resources and materials to better reach the gifted students than regular education classrooms, and therefore resulting in gifted students being more excited about schools and giftedness (Rogers, 2007). Whether it is through cluster grouping, ability grouping, or pull out services, it is evident that significant academic and social emotional gains can come from exposure to like-minded peers. | | | |
|  | **Reference List** | Callahan, C. M. (2005). Identifying gifted students from underrepresented populations. *Theory Into Practice, 44* (2), 98-104.  Coleman, M. R. (2003). The identification of students who are gifted. *Eric Digest,*1-7.  Johnsen, S. K. (2009, May). Best practices for identifying gifted students. *The Gifted and Talented Child*, 9-14.  Mcbee, M. T., Peters, S. J., & Miller, E. M. (2016). The impact of the nomination stage on gifted program identification: A comprehensive psychometric analysis. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 60* (4), 258-278.  Mcclain, M., & Pfeiffer, S. (2012). Identification of gifted students in the United States today: A look at state definitions, policies, and practices. *Journal of Applied School Psychology, 28* (1), 59-88.  National Association for Gifted Children. (n.d.). Identification. Retrieved from <https://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/gifted-education-practices/identification>  National Association for Gifted Children. (2011). Identifying and serving culturally and linguistically diverse gifted students.  Plucker, J. A., & Callahan, C. M. (2014). Research on giftedness and gifted education: Status of the field and considerations for the future. *Exceptional Children, 80* (4), 390-406.  Program delivery models for the gifted [Web log interview]. (2019).  Roberts, J. L., Inman, T. F., & Robins, J. H. (2018). *Introduction to gifted education*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.  Rogers, K. B. (2007). Lessons learned about educating the gifted and talented: A synthesis of the research on educational practice. *The Gifted Child Quarterly, 51* (4), 382-396. | | | |

\*This assignment meets standard 3b.1--Teachers know the content appropriate to their teaching specialty.  This assignment is just one example of how the teachers in our AIG program at ECU have a rich and in-depth understanding of the content in gifted education.  Specifically, this assignment focuses on the content of identification, placement, and services with application to a local plan of their choice.  Writing recommendations to the superintendent requires knowledge of content and synthesis of research and local practices.